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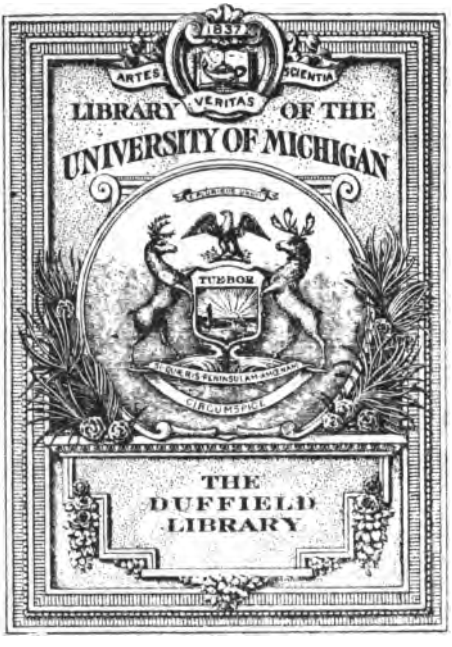

THE GIFT OF
THE TAPPAN PRESBY-
TERIAN ASSOCIATION

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THE

MISSIONARY CHARACTER.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY OF INQUIRY

IN THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN NEW HAVEN,

April 1, 1840.

BY ELI SMITH,

MISSIONARY OF THE A. B. C. F. M. TO SYRIA.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY OF INQUIRY.

NEW HAVEN:
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1840.

THIS Address, originally prepared for the Society of Inquiry in the Theological Seminary at Andover, and since delivered at several other Theological Seminaries, is now published at the request of the members of the Society of Inquiry in the Theological Seminary at New Haven, to whom the author dedicates it, with the earnest prayer, that many from among them may be prepared to enter upon the work of Missions, possessed of all those high qualifications, which he has here so feebly attempted to delineate.

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Tappan Presb. Ass
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ADDRESS.

I HAVE been invited to address you as a Society of *Inquiry*. The name your organization bears, is understood by none of you, I presume, as referring merely to inquiries of curiosity. Inquiries after personal duty come equally within the department which it occupies. Indeed, do I misjudge in presuming that its members, on the eve of coming forth upon the stage of life, are more anxious than for any thing else, to learn the part which duty calls upon them to act? The proper clue for you to follow in so important a search, is the alternate study of your characters, and of the fields that are open before you, accompanied with prayer to God that he would direct your judgments to a right conclusion.

Among the fields that invite you is that of foreign missions. So extensive, and so far from your personal observation is it, that I presume you will not consider it an unnecessary service, if I attempt, on the present occasion, to portray *the* CHARACTER *which the work of foreign missions requires.*

I shall assume that you are all inquirers after the claims of the missionary work upon you individually. For to my apprehension, it is very near an absurdity that any one should come forward into the ministry of the gospel, and never seriously and candidly inquire whether it may not be his duty to engage personally in

this service. What are the words of the commission under the authority of which you are expecting to act as ambassadors of Christ? Open the sacred document and read. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." These are not instructions to missionaries merely; but the decree by which the gospel ministry was instituted. They are the credentials of every minister. By them is he authorized to hold his office. And what is the idea of his office which they imply? Not merely that of a pastor, who settles down for life to take care of a parish a few miles in extent. Not merely that of a professor of theology who devotes his life to training up those who are to preach the gospel. Not merely that of a domestic missionary, who goes forth to build up the walls that have fallen down, or have never yet been erected. Not merely that of a foreign missionary, who expatriates himself that he may carry the gospel to the heathen. It embraces us all together, under the broad seal of a single commission. An idea sublime in the expansion, within which it embraces such an extent of space, and such a variety of subordinate duties; and beautiful in the unity with which it brings all to bear upon the one great object, the conversion of the world.

What a narrow, one-sided view of this grand idea have they, who see in their commission nothing to create the suspicion that it may be their duty to go abroad. They forget that the object for which the church is organized, is not so much the maintenance of fortresses already taken and garrisoned, as for universal conquest. And what are they but commissioned officers in this great army? Was ever an officer in Napoleon's army,

with which he would fain have subdued the world, commissioned with the understanding that he was of course to remain at home? His very acceptance of office was a pledge that he held himself in readiness to obey orders, wherever they might direct him to go. And what does your acceptance of office, under the great Captain of salvation imply, other than that you will lead up to the conflict whatever part of the army he may direct? Your very entrance into the ministry implies a promise that you will go to the ends of the world, if your Lord direct. The offer of one who gives himself up to a missionary society, to be sent to China, or Palestine, or wherever they see fit, is not more absolute. Am I wrong? Then the ministerial office loses in my estimation much of its dignity and honor. Am I right? Then how inconsistent are they who enter the ministry, and never candidly entertain the question, whether the Lord may not be directing them by his providence to enter the foreign field.

But my object now is not so much to urge the missionary work upon you, as to help you in the inquiry, whether you are qualified for it. In doing this, I shall be led to claim so many high qualities in the missionary character, that I feel, that being a missionary myself, I ought at the outset to apologize for what may seem to some like arrogance or vanity. A word of explanation will suffice. You know that we often perceive most distinctly what we *ought to be*, when some painful experience shows us what we *are not*. This principle will be called in to aid me on the present occasion. And if I shall at all succeed in the model I am about to sketch, it will be because I shall not hesi-

tate to draw liberally from the experience of my own faults.

Proceeding, then, with my subject, I will say, FIRST, *the work of missions requires* A CHARACTER WELL DISCIPLINED BY A THOROUGH EDUCATION.

By education, I mean that training of the mind, and also the elementary knowledge of most branches of science, which are furnished by the most thorough courses in our colleges and theological seminaries. The faculties thus acquire a just proportion and an even balance, that fit them to act correctly and with effect in all circumstances. In my opinion, this *general* training of the mind, carried as it is among us to the extent of an introduction into all the branches of science, preparatory to the study of any of the professions, is far more conducive to soundness of public opinion, and to the interests of truth, than if particular departments were entered earlier, and pursued more exclusively. By selecting a certain study early, and devoting himself wholly to it, the German scholar does, indeed, succeed in pushing his investigations farther than any among us. But can you rely upon his opinions? Take him out of his own department, and you will often find him possessing hardly a school-boy's knowledge of other subjects. Hence he is wanting in that practical sense of the general fitness of things, which would check the wildness of his speculations by showing their inconsistencies.

Now, if there is a man on earth who ought to be trained under these enlarging and adjusting influences of a well proportioned education, it is the missionary.

He has to act in circumstances to which he was before an entire stranger, and for which he could of course make no specific calculation. And how can he be prepared to act with safety, except by having a foundation laid so broad, that it will serve for whatever superstructure he may need to build upon it. I do not say he will have use for half the facts he may learn. But he will need all, and more than all, the discipline of mind the acquisition of them will give. He will have to cope with prejudices and superstitions, hydra-headed in their variety and tenacity of life; to adapt himself to a state of things different from all he has known before, often the very opposite; and to shape the mould in which is to be cast the religious, and sometimes the civil and domestic character of nations. And for such emergencies, is not a mind required whose machinery is so perfect and compactly adjusted, that no jarring can derange it, and no disturbing force drive it from its track to the ruin of all who are moved by its power? I know of no station occupied by a minister of the gospel, that requires a more complete education than that of a missionary, unless it be the station of those by whom missionaries and ministers are themselves educated.

The missionary candidate should go through the same course of study as the candidate for the sacred office at home. He should neglect no one exercise at college, or the seminary. Indeed, I consider it a great advantage which our country has, that it furnishes from its colleges and seminaries a sufficient number of missionaries, without the necessity of special institutions for their education. The financial advantage is con-

siderable, but that is the least. We thus send forth men of more enlarged minds, and better prepared in fact for their work, than if they had had an exclusively missionary education.

But is there not, also, a *special training* needed by the missionary, in addition to the education he receives in common with others? I am strongly tempted to say that there is. Extensive learning is always in place as a missionary qualification, and other things being equal, the more a missionary has of it, the more useful will he be. Few persons have better opportunities than he to enlarge the circle of the natural sciences, and extend our knowledge of geography. Few have more use for a minute acquaintance with history, in its least investigated departments, or has a better opportunity to add to its treasures. And few have more to do with foreign languages; certainly none should know them better.

But how shall so much learning be acquired? The candidate for missions may do something; if he be talented and diligent, he may do much, by extra study during the course of his education. And here is one great advantage of deciding early upon a missionary life. With what branches he shall make himself familiar, must and ought to depend somewhat upon his own taste. But *one* branch should be attended to in common by all. It is the languages. What I mean is, that a thorough acquaintance with the general principles of language, should be acquired by really mastering the few which come up in the course of his studies, so that he shall know what points to seize upon first, and how to proceed in learning a new one; rather than

that he should study many. French he ought, however, to be acquainted with, and perhaps, also, German; that he may use the valuable elementary and other books those languages contain, and if possible, be able to converse in the former, with foreign travellers and others whom he will meet abroad.

But with all he can accomplish during his course of education, the student comes out at best, but poorly entitled to the epithet of learned. Shall he tarry at home, that he may increase his qualifications? In my opinion he should not, unless he be very young. While remaining at home he would be growing older, and the early years thus spent here, are just the ones in which are acquired most readily, certain experiences essential to the missionary's success, as well as the practical use of foreign languages. Were all missionaries destined to be teachers of seminaries, or directors of printing presses, or translators, there would be more solid arguments for their remaining to increase their learning before they go. But they are not. Most of them are to be preachers; not of written sermons, for we never write sermons for the natives; but preachers from house to house, by the way-side, and to assemblies irregularly and occasionally gathered, small and large; in the most literal sense, popular preachers. For this is needed great tact in getting the attention of the people, dealing with their prejudices, and finding the way to their hearts, which only much experience among them can give. And they are to be addressed, not in the language of books, but to be talked to as they talk, in their own idiom, and with their own accents and tones, which are acquired the more perfectly, the earlier in life they are attempted.

Certainly this command of their spoken language, can be gained better in the midst of them than at home. There are *three* steps in the learning of a foreign tongue for purposes of intercourse. One is to understand it in books, another is to understand it when spoken, and the third to speak it intelligibly. Of these we usually in this country take only the first. It can be done any where, from the study of books. Yet even this can be accomplished fastest, where the same words and idioms are daily sounding in one's ears from the mouths of those around him. The other two can hardly be accomplished with entire success, any where else.

A book acquaintance with a language acquired at home, will indeed facilitate the acquisition of the practical part of it abroad. And still, while that book acquaintance can be learned more speedily where the language is spoken, it will be no economy of time to remain at home to learn it. Besides, I have found it of some consequence, in the learning of foreign tongues for use, that the learner do not carry on his study of the theory, much faster than he advances in the practice. If he does, he becomes too sensitive to the mistakes he will inevitably make at the outset, and there is a chance that diffidence will long prevent his attaining entire fluency of speech. It is when the words are put to use as fast as they are learned, and the study of books carried on at the same time, gradually to correct the errors that are made, that the most entire and speedy success is attained, in the acquisition of a language for missionary purposes.

Moreover, there are important experiences, and much knowledge of the people, of their prejudices, their partialities, their peculiar notions, to be learned, that are scarcely less necessary to the success of preaching, than is a knowledge of the language to be used. All of which the missionary is acquiring while studying the language. So that it is not a loss of time, but with a wise design, that his tongue is tied for a season after he enters the field. Indeed, I have often thought, that the gift of tongues might be a dangerous endowment, unless, as in the case of the apostles, inspiration accompanied it.

Allow me to remark in addition, that other faculties are called into exercise in acquiring languages as we learn them where they are spoken, than those which ensure success to a mere book linguist. The imitative and the social powers come in as important auxiliaries. Hence we can judge with no certainty, from the relative success of different persons in the study of languages at home, which will bring them into practice soonest, and with most success abroad.

My SECOND remark is, *that the work of missions requires* A CHARACTER THAT CAN ADAPT ITSELF TO CIRCUMSTANCES.

Important as it is that a missionary should be thoroughly educated, he must not be a mere scholar. In his *habits* he must be disposed to mingle with the people, in his own house and in theirs. After spending eight or ten years in close application, the diligent student is apt to acquire a strong partiality for his study. It is his sanctuary. Every interruption of his mental

pursuits he considers a calamity, and the day that brings nothing to pass in the way of study, is regarded as lost. But the missionary has to do with people that know nothing of the sacredness of a minister's study, and who are accustomed to no regular hours of visiting. He must be ready to see them at all hours, or he is set down as not wishing to be social, or perchance, as proud, and his house is soon deserted. And if it is, what becomes of his usefulness? Not only the good he might do to visitors is lost, but he will have no congregation to preach to on the Sabbath. For it is generally only by the attraction of personal acquaintance, that congregations are gathered. He must, therefore, make up his mind for all these interruptions, and feel when they come upon him, that he is just in the path of duty. And yet he must by no means neglect study. Such a love should he have for it, and so high should be his idea of its importance, that while his mind is thus pliable to circumstances, he shall not actually abandon it. He must be able to pursue it by saving the scraps of time, and to apply himself efficiently, though he have not the same hours every day in an inviolable sanctuary.

In his *views* of things he must be practical. Some persons have minds so formed that they can never take things as they are, and make the best of them. They can put up with nothing but perfection. What is not absolutely perfect, is worse than nothing. And every thing must be made perfectly straight at once. They forget that we live in a world of imperfection and universal derangement, where a choice of evils is often the only choice that is left us. Such minds will be un-

happy any where. They will be in danger of quarreling with every body and every thing, and thus destroying their usefulness. But peculiarly unhappy will they be in the missionary field. There the evils between which we are left to choose, are often very great. Some of the greatest, perhaps, we cannot touch at all; but are obliged to let them go for more favorable times. And those we can reach are so many, that we cannot even attempt to uproot them all at once. We must act upon one and then upon another, sometimes doing our work almost by halves, and, as it were, at loose ends, waiting for God's providence to bring about a favorable juncture, when the ends can be put together, and the whole organized into order and symmetry. In such circumstances, the man who can act only by the square and compass of absolute perfection, must be very uneasy. He will feel that nothing is doing, and nothing can be done, and will be very apt to quarrel with his brethren, and in the end abandon the cause.

The missionary should be a man who in forming his plans, shall not merely see that they be perfect in themselves, but, tracing out their workings step by step, be able to judge and judge correctly, how they will suit the exigencies to be provided for. He must look at things as they are, and surveying his field with a practical eye, be willing to attempt only such things as are practicable, and let the rest alone; not quarreling with all the world and with the providence of God, because impossibilities are not to be effected. While he would be glad to see every evil removed, and presses forward towards so desirable a result, hoping one day to see it attained, he must not be disappointed if it be not at

once reached, nor despise the day of small things. He must be able to rejoice in the good, and take courage from it, though it be not unalloyed with evil.

In his *partialities* he should not be narrow-minded. We naturally think our own country the best in the world; the best in its soil, its scenery, its climate, its government, its people. Among ourselves, it may be well enough to say all this, for we have no one at hand to feel aggrieved, nor to make us ashamed of our vanity. But will you let this American partiality bias your feelings and govern your deportment in the missionary field? You will, indeed, be apt to meet there with more deference than here, in those with whom you converse. They will very likely express admiration to your face, at all the great and good things of which you tell them, and call themselves mere blockheads for not having the same there. But should you undertake actually to substitute your peculiarities for theirs, you will find in them partialities not easily overcome, strengthened perhaps by having been wounded by what you have said.

Better is it for the missionary to feel himself a citizen of the world. Much that we are partial to here is better than what is found in other countries, only because we are accustomed to it; and much that is really preferable relates to matters morally indifferent. With all such things, the missionary should intermeddle as little as possible. He goes not to denationalize the people. Let him have expansion of mind enough to discern what is merely national, and leave it to regulate itself.

The work of missions requires, also, in the THIRD *place,* INDEPENDENCE AND STRENGTH OF CHARACTER.

We are not apt to be aware how few persons really think independently. Many who never suspect themselves of it, nor are hardly suspected by others, take their *opinions* from tradition or upon trust, and in their *movements* are directed by the general current. Such men are not properly qualified for foreign missions. Here at home, he who receives his opinions from his fathers, as an inheritance no more to be rejected than the real estate they bequeath him, or accepts the opinions of others, his cotemporaries, with little care to guard against depreciation or forgery in the mental currency, may be in no danger of bankruptcy, for he can pass off the bills upon others, as little disposed to protest them as himself. But let him go abroad, where they have no such credit, but must all be promptly redeemed with solid proof, and he will soon find his resources exhausted, and his mouth shut. The missionary must be eminently a man who can give a reason for the hope that is within him. He must be able to give it in little things as well as great; in regard to first principles, as well as conclusions. For he will find many current maxims, which are never questioned here, entirely new there, and even directly opposed to prevailing opinions. All such, if they are defensible, he must be able to defend, by arguments not merely valid in themselves, but which he can make to appear so to those with whom he reasons.

Nor is this all; he will find himself looking at his own opinions from a different point of view. What,

as he saw it at home, may have seemed symmetrical, solid, and standing upon a firm basis, will now, perhaps, as he looks at it from another side, appear to be disproportioned, going to decay, or standing upon a sandy foundation. He must have independence and discernment enough to go up and examine and decide for himself, whether the defects are merely in appearance, or real and fatal. If he have not, he will be in danger of abandoning as rotten, what is really as sound as he ever supposed it to be. Cases have occurred where important theological opinions have been abandoned, perhaps merely from this cause.

Yet some change will undoubtedly take place in the opinions of every missionary. Such a thorough revisal of them as his circumstances and experience call for, must be expected to lead to the rejection of some, for which he must adopt others. Then will be seen whether the action of his mind be independent and correct; for it will no longer feel the reins of a sound public opinion. From that quarter now, there comes only a misguiding influence; for public opinion around him will lead only to error. You may think there is little danger that a pious missionary will yield to it. But look at the principle of assimilation there is in us all. It is like a tendency to an equilibrium. A decided independence of mind is required to keep one above the common level of moral sentiment. If the missionary has it not, he will find himself gradually sinking to the common standard, and coming to think light of error and of sin, if he does not actually fall into it. So very strong is this tendency, as to overcome almost every degree of independence that is not

sustained by divine grace. I have rarely known an unrenewed man, who retained the soundness of his principles in those circumstances for any length of time.

Nor is independence of mind, merely enough to keep himself from falling into error and sin, sufficient. He must be strong enough to act on the offensive. He must make himself felt. His mind must have a power that shall carry others along with it. Merely to hold our own, is not what we go into the heathen world for. Men are needed for the work who have enough of character to impart it largely to others; who cannot live long in a place, without giving forth influences that shall assimilate many to them.

It is not only in his opinions, but also in his *actions*, that the missionary must be independent. What I mean, is not merely fertility of mind to devise plans of action. This may be, and often is combined with great inefficiency. A man may devise forty schemes in a day, and abandon every one of them before the next day arrives. This is one of the most undesirable characters for the missionary service. It will bring nothing to pass, except to keep others employed in canvassing its schemes. What is needed is, a mind comprehensive enough to embrace the whole field of action, inventive enough to devise plans best suited to meet its exigencies, and strong enough to hold fast to them. Should temporary difficulties arise, he must not be daunted. Should others doubt and waver, he must have strength of principle enough to spare some to them. In a word, he must be a safe and courageous pilot in the storm, as well as in the calm. Equally

fearless of the foaming breakers, as keen to discern the deceitful quicksands, he must be able to conduct the precious freight with which he is charged, free from all loss and damage.

Would you know what all this implies? Leave these ecclesiastical and benevolent organizations, adapted by the accumulated experience of generations, to the circumstances in which they have grown up. Bid farewell to these veterans in council, at whose hands you have been accustomed to ask and receive wisdom. Throw yourselves out of the current of this sound public opinion, which almost of itself conducts with safety those that float upon it, with little aid from oar or helm, and go where other circumstances of government, national character, and existing institutions, require other organizations. Feel that you are but a novice in the knowledge of these circumstances, and in experience any where, and that a false step may expose the best of causes to failure, and endanger the souls of a whole generation; and find yourself alone, without experienced counsellors from whom to borrow wisdom in time of need, and with no aid from any salutary tendencies in public opinion. In a sea where you are alone and a stranger, you have to build your own ship, construct your own chart, and act the pilot yourself.

Tell me now, is a weak and dependent mind, the one to be sent upon such an expedition? There never was manifested a greater ignorance of the work of foreign missions, than by some who have supposed, that because a man possessed peculiar strength of character, it was his duty to remain at home. Why, is

this foreign war to be conducted only by men so *timid* that they will only seek to entrench themselves, thinking it well with them if they escape capture? or so *weak* as to be decoyed away into every ambush that may be set for them? Such men, I might almost say, are worse than none; a sort of non-combatting supernumeraries, who only consume our stores, and require our care. To send such men betrays bad economy, as well as a misjudgment of the claims of the cause. The work of missions requires your strongest men; men who will not be frightened into idleness, nor inveigled into danger, nor driven from the field.

FOURTH; *The work requires also* A PATIENT AND PLIANT CHARACTER.

After all that has been said of the necessity of independence and strength of mind, we want no rashness, obstinacy, nor self-confidence. It is not the way of God to accomplish his plans, nor even to develop them, all at once. The kingdom of heaven is likened to a grain of mustard seed—a very small beginning, leading to great results. So in the missionary work. It requires a patience that can submit to start from very small beginnings. This is true of *individuals*, as well as of *stations*.

The missionary goes forth fired with zeal for the conversion of the world, expecting great things, and intending to attempt great things, perhaps not often without some degree of romance mingled with his ardor. But he finds himself suddenly brought to a stand, the moment he reaches his field. He has *no tongue* to preach or talk with. Though his spirit be

stirred within him, and he would fain be as eloquent as Paul upon Mars hill, not a word can he command. He has to submit to the drudgery of gathering vocabularies, or of turning over grammars and dictionaries, and to the drilling of Munshies and Mu'allims; he has to have patience to stammer on for months before he can make himself decently understood, and for a year or two before he can really preach effectively; and must suffer the mortification, in the mean time, of feeling that almost every thought he expresses is maimed, and himself often worsted in argument, merely for the want of words.

All this requires patience, nor is it all that requires it. The work at his station makes, perhaps, but slow progress. It may not appear that a door is open at all, until an attempt is made to enter it. Then it opens but slowly. Patient perseverance alone will secure any progress. To abandon his position will not do. Rashly to drive forward, heedless of what he runs against, will not do. God suffers no one, with impunity, to run before his providence. Faithfully to perform the task he has already given us, is the way to induce him to give us more. And this he will never fail to do, generally spreading out work before us considerably faster than we can accomplish it, that he may encourage our industry. But by neglecting work in hand, to attempt what he has not yet assigned us, we inevitably involve ourselves in embarrassment, and incur great liability to be entirely laid aside. Such rashness in the missionary work is peculiarly hazardous.

Nor is obstinacy scarcely less to be deprecated. The world is ever changing, and with it we must

change; not our principles, for they should lay fast hold of the immutable throne of the Eternal; but our plans, for they rest upon the fluctuations of human things. Yet some men are as inflexible in their plans, as in their principles. This is not expansive independence of mind, but rather contracted obstinacy. With it the missionary would transport his plans formed here, unmodified, to the missionary field, heedless of the changed character and circumstances of those who are to be affected by them. Or, having once formed his plans there, he would adhere to them, whatever changes may occur around him. Such a man will not keep up with the providence of God. That is always on the advance, when his servants do their duty, and their plans should advance with it. The missionary should calculate upon the probability, that what could not be done last year, may be done this, and fear no charge of fickleness in modifying his plans accordingly.

Not only should he allow his plans to be modified by circumstances, but by persons. His independence of mind must not degenerate into a self-confidence, brooking no control from his associates, or his society. Missionaries must operate in communities, and must operate harmoniously, with unity of plan. This, where all are men who think for themselves, can be brought about only by mutual deference and concession. If one refuse thus to condescend, feeling that his opinions and plans must be carried, maugre all objections, he becomes a divider, and harmony is at an end.

Not less necessary is a willingness to be controlled by a society. It is a favorite notion with some, especially in England, that missionaries should go out un-

connected with any society, and dependent only upon their own judgment for direction, and upon Providence for support. They call it the apostolic plan. Were the men indeed selected by Christ, as the apostles were, there would be less objection to it. But as the case is, a committee of pious, judicious men, seems the best substitute we can have, whereby to prevent unfit persons from taking upon themselves so weighty and difficult an office. And when in the field, had they the miraculous gifts and inspiration of the apostles, they might get along as well as they, without support and direction from a society. Paul could afford time to support himself by making tents, for he had no languages to learn, nor theology to study. But ministers at home cannot do this now, much less can missionaries.

Direction, also, the apostles had from the Holy Ghost. But can missionaries claim this now in any such sense? And shall there be no substitute for it? No man is so wise or so holy as not to need it. It does us all good to feel that we are responsible, not merely to God, but to some tribunal on earth. To say this is no impeachment of wisdom, of honesty, or of piety. We are all human. And when we know that our conduct is looked at by others who have a right to ask the reasons for it, we are almost necessarily more careful to see that we *have* reasons. This is one of the means employed by God to keep frail, erring human nature straight. And if any person needs it, it is the missionary, removed so far from the great regulator of even the good here, public opinion. The officers of a society are the regular channels, officially constituted,

for the conveyance to him of this public sentiment of the Christian community. No proper independence of mind requires him to sever this bond. If he is uneasy under it, something is wrong in his character; whether it be a jealousy, that will distort his view of both friend and foe, or a consciousness of defect, that makes him shrink from the light, or a degree of self-will, that will lead him into measures unwise and ruinous.

Far more necessary still is it, that the missionary should acknowledge and feel his dependence *upon God.* Every whit of independent feeling that militates against this, is entirely at war with the missionary character. Such independence can *do* nothing. Man has power to convert the soul nowhere, least of all amid the callousness and superstition of the unevangelized. Let your missionary attempt the work, relying on his own arm, and he will soon be discouraged. Whether he directs his blow at their vain superstitions, or aims at their hearts, it is equally without effect. One is thin air that closes after the stroke; the other is adamant that receives no impression. Nor will God encourage him by giving him success. God is jealous of his honor in the work of conversion. He will be known as its author. And where his agency is not acknowledged, there will he not work.

It is when the missionary feels and acknowledges his dependence on God, that he is successful. Let it be entire and constant, and he becomes strong, for God gives him of his own strength. What his own arm could not do, an almighty arm now accomplishes. Superstitions vanish, and hearts are broken before it. It is the missionary's only resort. And the more dis-

tinctly and constantly he flies to it, the more success will he have.

FIFTH; *The work of missions requires* A SELF-DENYING CHARACTER.

On this point, I want to begin with an argument which I fear would not be valid. I want to say that the *Christian community* have a right to expect it. But you might justly question whether they have *reason* to expect it, or a *right* to do so. Were all of them as self-denying for purposes of benevolence as some are, they might have. But look abroad upon the land, and tell me how many there are of these self-denying ones. Do Christians at large give enough for works of benevolence, to oblige them to curtail at all the comforts or luxuries usual to their rank of life? Some do it, and blessed be God, the number is increasing. But I am mistaken, if the greater part, so far from giving enough to occasional self-denial, actually give enough to feel it in any way. Their purses do not feel it, nor their hearts either. Now, is it in the natural course of things, that missionaries, sent out by such Christians, should be self-denying? Does water in the reservoir rise higher than at the fountain?

Have they any right to expect it? I know not by what text or principle of Scripture it can be proved, that the Savior requires more from one in this work, in proportion to his talents, than from another. His last command lies equally heavy upon all. It does not single me out to go and expose my life in poverty and exile, and permit my brother Christians here to sit down in their ceiled houses and hardly lift a finger in

the work. Think not that I am advocating a sort of agrarianism, which would strip the wealthy of their riches, before they can claim self-denial of their missionaries. Most missionaries have not deprived themselves of wealth, nor the prospect of it, by entering upon their labors. It never was, and never would have been theirs. We will leave the rich to their consciences and their Savior. But a comparison we *may* make with them who start in life on a level with missionaries; if you please, their brethren in the ministry. An illustration in point is before me. Here you are, brethren, candidates for missions, and candidates for the ministry at home. Let me then ask you who are to remain here, when you come to be as comfortably settled as many of your brethren who have preceded you are, what right will you have to complain of your brother missionary, who now sits here by your side, should you hear of his purchasing a horse, or a carpet, or furniture, as good as your own, when the prevailing style of those with whom he associates requires it of him, it may be, even more than it does of you? Has the Savior sold you a dispensation from the strict requirements of his commands, which he has withheld from him?—But I will say no more. This plea for self-denial I must abandon as unavailable at present. To compare ourselves among ourselves is not wise. Nor is it necessary. We have arguments enough without it.

One is, that the *heathen* have a right to expect it. Look abroad upon the world, and see the dark clouds of ignorance and of sin that rest upon almost every land. Go forth and penetrate the gloom. Sit down in their hovels, the abodes of every species of wretched-

ness, physical and moral. Walk through their temples polluted with lust and blood. And let the conviction fasten upon you, with a power not to be shaken off, and a weight scarcely to be borne, that they are all lost, lost forever, unless rescued by missionary efforts. Then compare the stinted means contributed by Christians for the accomplishing of so mighty a work; so stinted as to be only as the small dust of the balance toward outweighing a world full of sin; and increased with so much difficulty, that it seems almost as if it had reached its maximum. And finally, calculate that every dollar you save by economy, makes these limited funds go further and reach a greater number of the perishing. Do this, and you have my argument for self-denial, drawn from the claims of the heathen world. It appeals directly to the deepest feelings of the Christian's heart, those feelings which are the proper source of the only true missionary spirit. And can the missionary with that spirit be self-indulgent?

The *Savior* has a right to expect it. He has set the example. But how shall we describe, or conceive of his self-denial? Those glories which he had with the Father before the world was, and laid aside when he entered upon his mission, who hath fully known? Even for a glimpse of them, you would need the vision of the prophet to reveal the worship of the seraphim that surround his throne. And the depth of abasement and suffering to which he descended, what is all that missionaries ever encounter in comparison with it? Such an example of self-denial makes one ashamed to appropriate the name. It seems an almost impious mis-

nomer. Yet this very feeling results from the force of the argument. We need really to practice self-denial, before we dare even to contemplate our pattern. It is an argument we ought to feel, for it was for our sakes the Savior did it all. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." And shall we shrink from imitating the self-denial by which we were ourselves redeemed? If we do, where is the evidence that we have any portion of his spirit? that we are his disciples? Oh, how can self-indulgent Christians, in any station, meet such a Savior? As they see the print of the nails in his hands, and of the spear in his side, will they not hang their heads with shame? Much more confounded must the self-indulgent missionary be. For he is the ambassador of this Savior in the very work in which he set such an example. And pray what does he think, when he attempts to consult his ease in carrying forward a work which it cost so much self-denial and suffering to begin? Does he imagine that the servant is above his Lord? or that he that is sent is greater than he that sent him? Such is the inference from his conduct. How will he meet it, when called to render an account of his mission?

The *nature of the work* calls for self-denial. Its prosperity depends upon it. I urge this point because I am, and have long been deeply convinced of this fact. I pray never to see the day, when missions shall no longer be considered a self-denying work. Their glory will then be departed. I would increase this feature of the work, rather than diminish it. It is the flaming sword to deter the unqualified from engaging in it.

While it keeps its position, only they who can endure hardness are likely to venture upon the work. Remove it, and you let in the indolent and the fearful, who in time of peace will do little, and when the noise of battle comes, will turn their backs and flee. We want those who, for the love of the Savior and of souls, will be content with moderate outfits; who, when called to it, will not complain of small houses, plain furniture, and coarse food; and who will throw the weight of their example and influence into the scale of self-denial, rather than of increased expensiveness in style of living. Then we shall keep the standard high, and be pretty sure of men who will not desert their post, be it one of labor or of danger.

SIXTH; *The missionary work requires* A BENEVOLENT CHARACTER.

By this I mean, not a speculative abstract benevolence, which remains torpid the greater part of a Christian's life, but a living active principle, never weary with well doing. It must be a benevolence that will go in search of objects to bless. The missionary must not sit down and wait to be inquired after. If he do, he may live almost a solitary and a useless life. For few will feel that they need his instructions, until he has himself excited the feeling. He must have a benevolence that will urge him forth among them. It must be such as will not allow him to shun their hovels and their cellars, but will find there, in deeds of kindness, the very enjoyment it relishes, and will give him patience to bear with their ignorance and stupidity. This going out into the highways and hedges, and compel-

ling men to come in, is a kind of work of which the missionary has much to do. It is thus his congregations will be gathered, and their hearts opened to receive the truth.

Indeed, we find that personal acquaintance is the secret of our influence and usefulness. While we remain strangers, the people will not come to hear us, nor will they receive what we say. They feel more at home where their own superstitions are practiced; and their priests can tell them any falsehoods about us they choose without danger of detection. But a personal acquaintance refutes all such slanders, and draws them around us. It must be extended as widely as possible. And an ardent benevolence is the very thing to send the missionary forth among them for this purpose.

It must be a benevolence that will attend to *small things* as well as great. Our Savior's chief errand in this world was to save souls. Yet he did not neglect the bodies of men. So blunt were their spiritual perceptions, that had he confined his attentions to their eternal interests, they could hardly have appreciated the benevolence of his character. But good done to their bodies they could feel. So he fed the hungry, healed the sick, raised the dead. And thus, by bringing down his benevolence to acts, the value of which they could appreciate, he took the most effectual course to make them realize it in spiritual matters of far higher moment.

Our situation is analogous. They see not what benevolence there can be in attempts to give them a new religion, when their old ones are, in their estimation, good enough and perfectly satisfy them. But they

have still among them the poor, the sick, and the distressed. These come to us, sometimes perhaps to our annoyance. We are sometimes, it may be, a little provoked, that they will consult us only in regard to temporals, and consider attention to these a waste of valuable time. But our Savior judged more wisely. A disease cured, hunger appeased, useful advice given, may produce a stronger conviction of our real benevolence, and do more to win a way for truth to the heart, than all the anxiety we could possibly express for the salvation of the soul. Their confidence is won by good which they can appreciate.

But to this end, it must be done in a *manner* that shall carry a conviction of its sincerity. The missionary's benevolence should be legible in his features, it should be heard in the tones of his voice. It should shine out as through a transparent medium. It should be so evident as to be felt by all, that he does good, not from a sense of duty, nor from expediency, but because he loves to do it.

Yet after all, his benevolence should aim steadily at the *salvation of souls* as its great object. While he has a heart to pity temporal wretchedness, he should feel unspeakably more for the misery of the soul. External evils he should regard only as the indications of a fatal malady within. And while he applies remedies only to them, he should feel that he is merely treating symptoms, and be ever waiting and anxious for an opportunity effectually to reach the seat of the disease. As he surveys with curiosity the throngs of populous cities, the thought should ever be uppermost, that their souls are perishing. As he searches into their tempo-

ral wants, and attempts to relieve them, it should whisper to him, be not content with this, of spiritual help they stand in far greater need. As he gathers them into schools, and aims to elevate their minds by the diffusion of intelligence, it should not let him rest till the saving truths of the gospel have taken possession of their hearts. It should be as an ever active instinct, to detect for him the best ways of access to their hearts. It should be a craving appetite, never so nearly satisfied itself as when he is breaking to them the bread of life.

His benevolence must also be such as can *bear opposition.* It will meet with many returns of ingratitude and hatred. But if this quench it, it is not Christ-like. Where should we have been if the love of Christ could have been thus quenched? He met here with little else but ingratitude, and finally was murdered by those he came to save. The missionary should imitate his model, 'considering him who endured such contradiction of sinners, lest he be weary and faint in his mind.' Can his benevolence not outlive ingratitude, it is only the fitful selfish benevolence of nature, not the benevolence which the missionary is to have. His Lord has said, "If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same." "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." This benevolence, unquenchable by opposition, is the only thing that will sustain him. He will have occasion for it every day. And if he possess it, the very ingratitude and enmity which would dis-

courage others, will only move him with new zeal. It is only additional fuel to kindle into a brighter flame the benevolence with which he is fired.

SEVENTH; *The missionary work requires* A CHARACTER POSSESSED OF STRONG FAITH.

Missions are eminently a work of faith. It is the aliment upon which they feed. To *engage* in them, one needs a realizing faith in spiritual things. He needs it in respect to *himself*, as well as in respect to the heathen. What besides this, unveiling eternity before him, can detach him from friends and country, and send him off cheerful to seek a grave in a strange land? If he believe and feel not eternal things, so as to make things here appear trifling and transitory, and those alone worth living for, will he be contented in his exile? He has put himself in a position which faith alone can enable him to enjoy. There is no remedy. He must walk by faith, or not at all. Without it he will soon stumble into the mire of despondency and discontent.

He needs it in respect to the *heathen*. What else can feed his benevolence, and fire his zeal, but a belief in what the Bible says of their future prospects? Nothing strikes so deadly a blow at the missionary spirit, as the notion, that after all, the heathen are not exposed to eternal punishment. Be it founded upon the imagination, that there is some mistake as to their real moral desert, and that they are not so wicked as they have been represented; or upon the fancy that in some way, there will be made to them after death, those offers of salvation, which they failed to receive on earth.

I do not believe that Paul had any such notions of the salvability of the heathen, when he was exposing himself to that long list of perils for their rescue. And certainly nothing but the belief, that they are in a mass going down to eternal ruin, can keep modern missions alive. The missionary needs it at every step. It is this that starts him upon his career. It renews his resolution when difficulties crowd his path. It breathes into him new strength, when his feet faulter from weakness in sultry climes. It helps him to descend cheerful and without regret into an early grave. The object he aims at is worth all he has sacrificed for it. It is to save souls that are perishing, each of which outweighs the world in value.

He needs also faith in the *divine promises.* For what else is there to encourage in him the hope of the world's conversion? I know that some talk as if current events show plainly, that we are advancing with rapid strides towards the millennium. It may be that an over-estimate of the difficulties of the work to be done, from long struggles with them, has unfitted me to appreciate as I ought, the progress that has actually been made. At any rate, I cannot clearly see the ground for the congratulations that some indulge in. I fear they are founded more upon what is hoped for, than upon what actually has been done. Success *has* attended missions, signal in some cases, and in all greater than we had a right to expect, considering the instruments that have been employed; and for it let us be grateful. Let us take courage from it. But all this is only a drop in the ocean, towards the conversion of the world. And it sometimes almost appears as if what is gained abroad is lost at home.

Some, looking at the world in this light, and leaving out of view the promises, come to the conclusion that the actual conversion of all men, is not to be expected. According to them, the gospel is to be published to all, and a few saved, and this is the highest aim of missions. Others expect equally little from missions, but hope for the conversion of the world by miracle. It is to be done, they imagine, by the personal presence of the Savior, in a new dispensation. Such low expectations from missions, most assuredly will not keep them alive. It is nothing less than the hope of converting the world, that will call forth the efforts of the church. Abandon this hope, and you may as well call home your missionaries, and disband your societies at once; for it will ultimately come to this.

The proper course is, to turn from our poor efforts, and their hitherto comparatively small effects, to the divine promises. They are explicit, full, and cover the whole ground. With faith to build a hope upon them, firm, efficient, strong, we shall find encouragement, though all around be dark and disheartening. For we can wish no firmer foundation for our hopes, than the truth of God. There is no mistake here. The object it promises is great enough to absorb all the energies of the church, and it shall certainly be accomplished.

He must have faith, also, in the *power* of God. I do not say in men, nor philosophy, nor means and measures. Such faith will fail on missionary ground. Here at home the ardent and the sanguine may sometimes be led to indulge it before they are aware. But the missionary work is a corrective of all such errors. Such faith is a plant that can rarely grow on heathen

ground. It will find no nourishment. Who are the men in whom you would trust? Powerful in argument and eloquent in language they may be here, but there they speak with stammering tongues. What is the philosophy that is to be so convincing? The minds of the heathen are incapable of perceiving its nice distinctions, and probably their language also of expressing them. And what are the means and measures that are to effect so much? Apply them to the callousness of their consciences, and the obduracy of their hearts, and they are not felt. Every sermon you preach, every conversation you hold, makes you feel that it is not in men, nor in philosophy, nor in means and measures, to change the heart.

You are driven to God, as having alone the power that can effect it. Here rests our only hope for the conversion of any individual, and much more for the conversion of all men. How are those glorious promises, upon which we hang our hopes for the conversion of the world, to be fulfilled? As things go on now, is there any prospect of it, from such feeble means, and such feeble men to use them? Our only source of encouragement is in the power of God. The influences of his Spirit alone can renovate the face of the moral world, and to these must we look. They must be felt so *extensively* as to reach the hearts of all, preparing them to embrace the truth almost as soon as it is heard; so that there shall be no waiting as now, for line upon line and precept upon precept, year after year, without, after all, in a majority of cases, any cordial embracing of the truth. And they must be felt so *powerfully*, as to bring believers up to that state of holiness, where

they will not, as is too often the case now in times of prosperity, run off into the extravagances of spiritual pride, or fall into the lethargy of spiritual sloth, from which nothing but adversity, or perhaps persecution, and it may be not even that, can arouse them and bring them back. There must be something like a new dispensation, a dispensation of the Spirit, before the word of God shall have free course, and run and be glorified, in the conversion of the world.

This must be the missionary's sole reliance. All calculations founded upon the inherent efficacy of means, lead only to the conclusion, a conclusion as inevitable as are the results of arithmetical calculation, that the world will never be converted. Have you this trust in the power of God? Then you can plunge into the cares, the toils, the discouragements of the missionary work, safely defended against all the onsets of despondency. For you have a shield that shall quench all the fiery darts of the devil.

Lest any of you should be discouraged by the consciousness of falling below the standard I have set before you, allow me to add, in conclusion, that *the missionary character in a great measure forms itself in the work.* If there be the germs of the necessary qualifications, and the work be entered upon with an entire consecration, and pursued with a singleness of eye, they will be developed, and the character will in time grow up to the standard. It is a delightful proof of the excellence of the cause, of its entire coincidence with the spirit of the gospel, that it has this effect to mature the character. No employment to which a

Christian can devote himself does this more effectually.

To review, in proof of this, the several qualifications that have been specified, and shew its influence to form and perfect them, would not be expedient. I will merely take time to say, that it liberalizes, confirms, and enlarges the views of doctrine and of duty.—It *liberalizes* them, by lowering undue estimates of points of minor consequence. To the peasant who never left his native valley, the greatest stream, the most powerful man in it, is the most important in the world. So to the Christian who was born, educated, and lives within the circle of one set of circumstances, the doctrines and the duties that stand most prominent there, are the most important. Some of these may be speculations or duties, brought into vogue by local events, and hardly intelligible or practicable elsewhere. All such the missionary has to leave behind him. And as he views them in the distance from his field of labor, they diminish to their proper rank of minor points, true indeed it may be, but of limited application, and therefore of minor consequence.

In the same manner are his views of other doctrines and duties *confirmed*. What is of universal application and utility, is of primary importance. And as he goes to other nations, barbarous it may be or civilized, but in either case equally different in character and customs from his own, and finds the same great doctrines and duties of the gospel, as dear to himself, and as intelligible and efficacious in their application to them, he puts them down as tried corner stones. And while he swings loose from points of local interest and minor

value, he settles down upon these, sure that they are a foundation that shall never be moved.

Not less noticeable is the tendency of his work to *enlarge* his views. Examining old opinions and facts from new points of view, helps him to understand them better. Observation and study of other countries and other people, not as a hasty traveller, but for many years, with the great variety of experience through which his work leads him, stores his mind with new ideas and information, to which he would otherwise have remained a stranger. But above all, does the *object* for which he labors enlarge his views; yea it *swells his heart.* By its greatness and its nature, it invites to enlarged conceptions, to generous emotions. It has nothing in it local, nothing selfish. It is wide as the world. What capacities of the mind or of the heart are there, that have not here room enough to expand? They reach no restricting barriers till they encompass the globe.

I conclude with the earnest prayer, that those of you who are contemplating this work, may, by entering upon it from proper motives, and pursuing it with more devotedness than I have done, secure to yourselves a far larger share of its blessed influences upon your own characters, as well as far more souls as seals of your ministry.